

**Question for written answer E-001773/2018
to the Commission**

Rule 130

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Subject: Detention of the Proactiva Open Arms boat by Italy for promoting irregular migration

The chief prosecutor of Catania ordered that the boat of NGO Proactiva Open Arms be detained in the port of Pozzallo. The boat was sequestered because it was accused of promoting 'illegal immigration and criminal activities'.

The Proactiva Open Arms boat docked at the Italian port on Saturday after an incident involving coastguards from Libya. The NGO reported threats coming from the Libyan coastguards that prevented most of the migrants from approaching the boat during the rescue operation. According to the Chair of the NGO, Oscar Camps, 'protecting human lives must be a priority of any organisation, whether civilian or military', and he pointed out that this is what is stated in law, and that sending the victims to Libya would be 'tantamount to a pushback'.

Taking into account the 1951 Geneva Convention on the Law of the Sea:

Can the Commission reveal what its own view is on this accusation against life-saving NGOs that provide humanitarian aid, and whose activities compensate for the lack of a European search and rescue mission?

Does the Commission plan on taking action against the Italian Government to ensure these charges are dropped immediately?

Will the Commission consider reviewing Directive 2002/90EC, which defines the facilitation of unauthorised entry, transit and residence, so that it fully complies with the United Nations Protocol against the trafficking of migrants, which exempts those providing humanitarian aid from criminal charges?